

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-1

THE NEW YORK TIMES
20 December 1979

Iranian Official Held in Teheran As Ally of U.S.

Militants Say Documents of Embassy Show Links

By CHRISTOPHER S. WREN

Special to The New York Times

TEHERAN, Iran, Dec. 19 — The Iranian militants occupying the American Embassy here announced tonight the arrest of Iran's Ambassador to Scandinavia and produced what they said were embassy documents to accuse him of having collaborated with the United States.

Abbas Amir Entezam, who served as Deputy Prime Minister and spokesman for the former revolutionary Government of Mehdi Bazargan, was the first prominent Iranian to be arrested after having been mentioned in American diplomatic correspondence seized by the militants.

Mr. Entezam's arrest, which according to one account took place at the Teheran airport, occurred after he was summoned home from Stockholm, purportedly for consultations. The militants said tonight that they had waited for him to be taken into custody before making excerpts from the documents public.

Excerpts Read on Television

Two of the young militants, appearing unshaven and in rumpled army jackets on a late evening Iranian television program, read extracts of papers said to have been taken from the files of the seized United States Embassy. In them, Mr. Entezam was portrayed as a friendly Iranian official who was eager to mend relations between his country and the United States and who had offered to act as a conduit from his embassy office in Stockholm.

The excerpts read out tonight did not contain anything that clearly demonstrated Mr. Entezam had been an agent for the Central Intelligence Agency or showed that he had done anything to betray his country. But the frequent mention of him in the documents held by the radicals, given the current climate of anti-American feeling, seemed sufficient to bring accusations of disloyalty if not of treason, a crime that is punishable by death under Iran's Islamic law.

'Intelligent Speaker' for Regime

The two militants took turns reading out references to Mr. Entezam in Persian from sheaves of papers piled before them and in interpreting their significance. The dates of the correspondence were not made clear, but they appeared to span a period from last summer, when Mr. Entezam stepped down as Government spokesman, to the seizure of the American Embassy on Nov. 4, while he was serving as Iran's ambassador to Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

One document read in Persian and attributed to the embassy's chargé d'affaires, L. Bruce Laingen, described Mr. Entezam as an "intelligent speaker for the revolutionary Government" and "actively interested in maintaining contacts with the United States and sincerely trying to mend bilateral relations between Iran and the United States." The documents said that the embassy would continue talking with him as much as possible.

A second document, as read out by one of the Iranian radicals, said that the C.I.A. had asked the embassy to inform Mr. Entezam that it was ready to exchange information after Sept. 10. There was no other evidence produced to suggest that Mr. Entezam was knowingly involved in contacts with the intelligence agency.

Other purported documents quoted him as assuring the Americans that it would be "easier to talk in Stockholm" and that he would help when he returned to Teheran every two months for consultations. The militants said that he also hoped to be appointed as Iran's ambassador to the United States.

Mr. Entezam, a former businessman who imported electrical equipment, was an active figure in the first Government that emerged from the February revolution that deposed Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlavi. However, he made a number of enemies and there were rumors in Teheran that he had profited from arranging exit visas for wealthy Iranians who wanted to escape the new regime.

His arrest seemed likely to lead to a roundup of other Iranian citizens and to heighten the current antagonism against the United States in the wake of the embassy takeover.

Carter Called a 'Frightened Lion'

Earlier today, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini likened President Carter to a "frightened lion" and said that military and economic threats by Washington would have no effect on the Iranian people.

"These are the cries an animal makes to frighten its opponents," said the Iranian religious leader, speaking of American pressures that have included a proposed naval blockade of the Persian Gulf. He made the remarks in an interview in the city of Qum with Mohammed Hassan Hekmat, an Egyptian journalist now

"We are not afraid of tough talk from Carter," said Ayatollah Khomeini, who has consistently supported the takeover of the United States Embassy by the radical youths more than six weeks ago. He asserted that the Iranian people were not frightened because they welcomed rather than feared death. "People say, 'We want to be martyrs,'" he asserted.

"Mr. Carter tries to frighten such a people with military intervention," the Iranian leader went on. "Mr. Carter himself is frightened because he does not believe in the afterlife."

While he was meeting with Mr. Heykal, tens of thousands of Iranians surged through the streets of Teheran in a funeral procession mourning a murdered associate of Ayatollah Khomeini. The procession turned into the most impassioned anti-American demonstration for several weeks.

U.S. Blamed for Killing

Hojatolislam Mohammed Mofateh, the dean of the Divinity College of Teheran University, was shot down yesterday along with two bodyguards by unknown assailants. The policy-making Revolutionary Council blamed the United States and the C.I.A. despite the absence of any evidence, and the contention was echoed by the crowds today.

The Ayatollah and his militant supporters occupying the American Embassy have not budged from their insistence that the 50 hostages there will be put on trial for espionage unless the deposed Shah is sent back to Iran. The only signs of a willingness to compromise have come from a few officials within the Iranian Government.

Hashemi Rafsanjani, the acting Minister of Interior and a member of the Revolutionary Council, raised the possibility in a Teheran newspaper interview today that relatives of the hostages might be allowed into Iran to see them in the Christmas period.

"About the hostages," he said, "I should say that we will be extremely happy if, from the human point of view, we create conditions so that these people can have contact with their relatives and the American nation so that it can be informed about the health of these individuals and understood to some extent that our issue is not the issue of these 50 people who are hostages but the interests of a country." Mr. Rafsanjani also has the title of hojatolislam, of lesser importance than ayatollah, in the Shiite religious hierarchy. The interview appeared in the newspaper Bamdad.

Decision Up to Khomeini

Asked whether his statement meant that the Iranian Government might let the families of the hostages visit them during the Christmas season, Mr. Rafsanjani replied that this decision was up to Ayatollah Khomeini and the militants holding the embassy.

"However, there is a possibility their families will be allowed to visit them and we would like such a thing to take place," he said.